

17 January 2024 DRAFT

First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia | Friends of 2125 Chestnut Street

Vision Plan Report

Vision Plan Process & Concept Design Narrative

DIGSAU

The image shows the interior of a church. The walls are painted a light blue color. On the left, there are large, arched wooden beams painted in a reddish-brown hue. The ceiling is white and features three ornate, multi-tiered chandeliers with many lit candles. In the center, there is a wooden doorway with a glass window. To the left of the doorway, a framed religious painting hangs on the wall. To the right, a large, ornate wooden pulpit is mounted on the wall. The floor is covered with rows of dark wooden pews. In the background, near the doorway, there are some people and a table covered with a red cloth. The overall atmosphere is quiet and solemn.

01 | Executive Summary



Executive Summary

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this Vision Plan Process & Concept Design Narrative (“Vision Plan Report”) is to lay out a comprehensive Vision Plan, or conceptual road map, for repairs, renovations, and improvements to the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia’s facilities, including its buildings, building systems, and exterior spaces at 2125 Chestnut Street.

Included are a number of potential projects of various types, scales, and levels of impact, ranging from building envelope repairs relating to the roof, windows, and masonry walls; building system repairs involving air conditioning, heating, ventilation, lighting and electrical, plumbing, sprinklers and fire alarms, and Audio Visual/Telecommunications; to a potential new elevator, new and updated bathrooms, kitchen and pantry spaces, and storage areas; new and/or refurbished finishes and furnishings in public spaces; and architecturally integrated ADA-accessibility improvements at the Sanctuary, Basement, and Entry Garden along Van Pelt Street.

The intention of laying out these potential projects is to eliminate or minimize, to the extent possible, the need to undo the work done during one project during subsequent projects. Phasing recommendations and project timelines were not developed as a part of this report, as these will depend in large part on fundraising outcomes and the

establishment of further consensus around feasibility, priorities, and impacts to operations.

Further information regarding the vision planning process, feedback received from the congregation and other building users, iterative design studies done along the way, and a preliminary analysis of relevant zoning, building code, historical, and accessibility requirements, are included in the Appendix of the report.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia is the first church in the United States to proclaim itself “Unitarian,” and today serves as a theologically diverse congregation whose mission is to awaken love and justice in our lives and the world. Its facilities at 2125 Chestnut Street were designed by renowned Philadelphia Architect Frank Furness, whose father, Reverend William Henry Furness, served as the congregation’s first settled minister. The buildings are listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (PRHP).

Friends of 2125 Chestnut Street is a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation founded to assist in fundraising, planning, and preservation of the properties of the First Unitarian Church at 2125 Chestnut Street. The buildings serve the congregation of the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, as well as its tenants, neighbors, and community partners.

This project is a collaborative effort between the First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia and Friends of 2125 Chestnut Street, for which a Memorandum of Understanding outlining the process of working together has been agreed to by both parties.

A Visioning Committee comprising members of Friends of 2125, Church leadership, and Church Facilities and Operations staff acted as the point of contact with the design team and provided key decisions.

PROCESS

This concept report marks an important milestone in establishing broader planning goals and priorities and setting a course toward the execution of various projects. During a previous assessment phase performed in 2020, the design team familiarized itself intimately with the buildings, utility systems, and uses, and created a “Short List” of 16 high priority recommendations pertaining to roof, window, and masonry repairs, lighting, Heating/Ventilation/Air Conditioning, and Sprinklers/Fire Alarms, along with a “Long List” of 67 overall recommendations pertaining to building and building system upgrades and repairs, of which a number have already been or are currently being completed.

The focus of this current phase, which lasted from early Spring through Fall of 2023, was to gain insight and feedback from the Visioning Committee through regular meetings and work sessions, and from the congregation and other building users through questionnaires, interviews, and workshops. A significant objective for the visioning phase was to conduct a highly inclusive and engaged design process, including ongoing input, participation, and communication with various stakeholders.

Current and next steps involve a fundraising process being undertaken by Friends of 2125 Chestnut Street, the ongoing completion of repair and renovations projects identified during the Facilities Assessment phase, and the potential to move forward with the design and execution of any number of the projects identified in this Vision Plan Report.

VISION

The aim of the Vision Plan is to implement high impact improvements to the building at good value, in order to support the mission, values, and vision of the First Unitarian Church in the years to come, with a specific emphasis on accessibility, inclusion, and sustainability. Specific goals identified throughout the vision planning process include:

1. Essential maintenance and repairs to the roof, masonry facades, stained glass and other windows, and structure in the Sanctuary
2. Building system improvements to heating, ventilation, air conditioning, lighting, fire protection (sprinklers, detectors, alarms), intercom, sound / AV, and videoconferencing systems and installation of automatic external defibrillators

3. Improved accessibility via an elevator and/or lift, ramping at building entries and at interior where required to be integrated with the architecture and landscape design
4. Improved outdoor spaces and better visual and/or physical connections from inside to outside
5. Improved existing spaces such as the kitchen; while creating new spaces for enhanced or new functions, programs, and uses
6. Improved comfort, accessibility and flexibility of seating in the Sanctuary and Chapel
7. Preserve some historic elements while incorporating more contemporary, inclusive Unitarian Universalist imagery
8. Provide better and more accessible bathrooms, water fountains, and coffee / pantry area
9. Have more effective and convenient storage solutions for various programs and users
10. More interior and exterior display spaces for children's programs, information to the public, and building users and visitors
11. A more accessible, flexible, and adaptable Chancel in the Sanctuary
12. A more welcoming Porch on Chestnut Street

For organizing purposes, these projects were grouped into the following categories. The intention is not to necessarily sequence or phase the projects in a corresponding order, and it is anticipated that projects from different categories may be undertaken simultaneously. Every effort was made to define work in each project need not be undone in other projects.

Category 1: Essential Maintenance & Utility Upgrades

Category 2: Targeted Improvements

Category 3: Major New Construction and Renovations

SUSTAINABILITY

As an adaptive reuse of an existing historic building, the Vision Plan is at its core a sustainable endeavor. Further strategies for ensuring sustainable solutions include identifying climate and use-appropriate active and passive energy reduction strategies such as smart building system controls, automatic occupancy sensors, calibrated heating, cooling, and lighting loads, and upgrades to the building envelope and windows. As a design and benchmarking tool, the design team would make use of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Framework for Design Excellence, a 10-point approach to finding creative solutions to ensure design excellence and climate action toward zero carbon, equitable, resilient, and healthy buildings.

In addition to design benchmarks, there exist several sustainability certifications that could be considered for the execution of future work, including the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Certification; the WELL Ratings by the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI); Passive Building Standard by Passive House Institute US (PHIUS), and others.



Proposed Entry Garden Perspective Sketch

Vision Plan Framework: Three Categories of Intervention

01 Essential Maintenance & Utilities Systems Upgrades

- Required in the immediate term to ensure code compliance, building integrity, and safety
- Significant work has been recently completed or is underway
- Avoids redundancy with recommended improvements below

02 Targeted Improvements

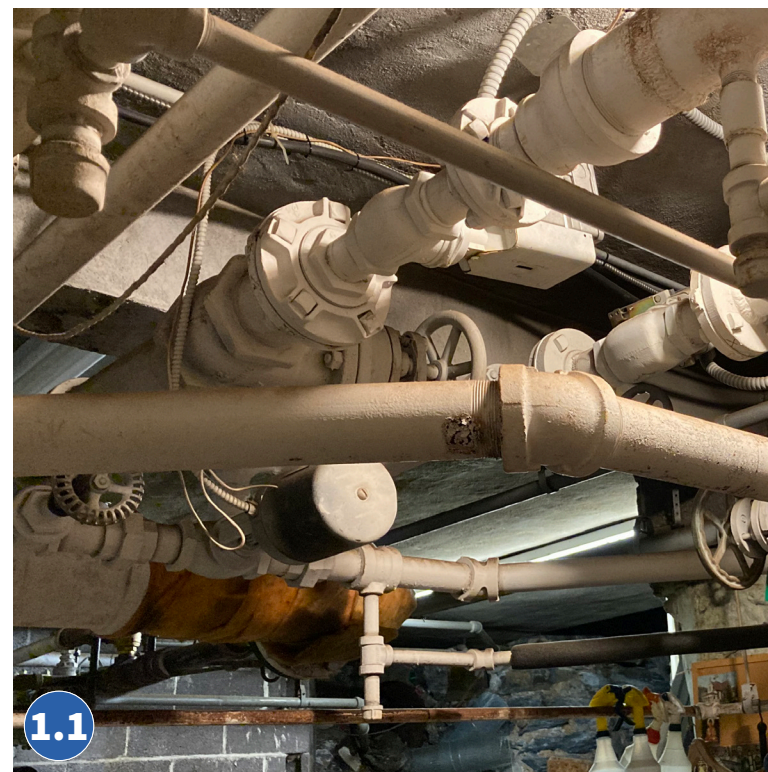
- Focuses on ground level public spaces
- Enhances accessibility, comfort, flexibility, and adaptability
- Preserves key historic elements while incorporating essential and inclusive improvements

03 Major Construction & Renovation

- Involves projects of a larger scale, impact, and execution timeframe than those above
- In addition to ground level, focuses on accessibility throughout building and outdoor spaces
- Avoids rework relative to initial improvements

NOTE: THESE CATEGORIES ARE NOT INTENDED NECESSARILY AS CONSTRUCTION PHASES

01 Essential Maintenance & Systems Upgrades

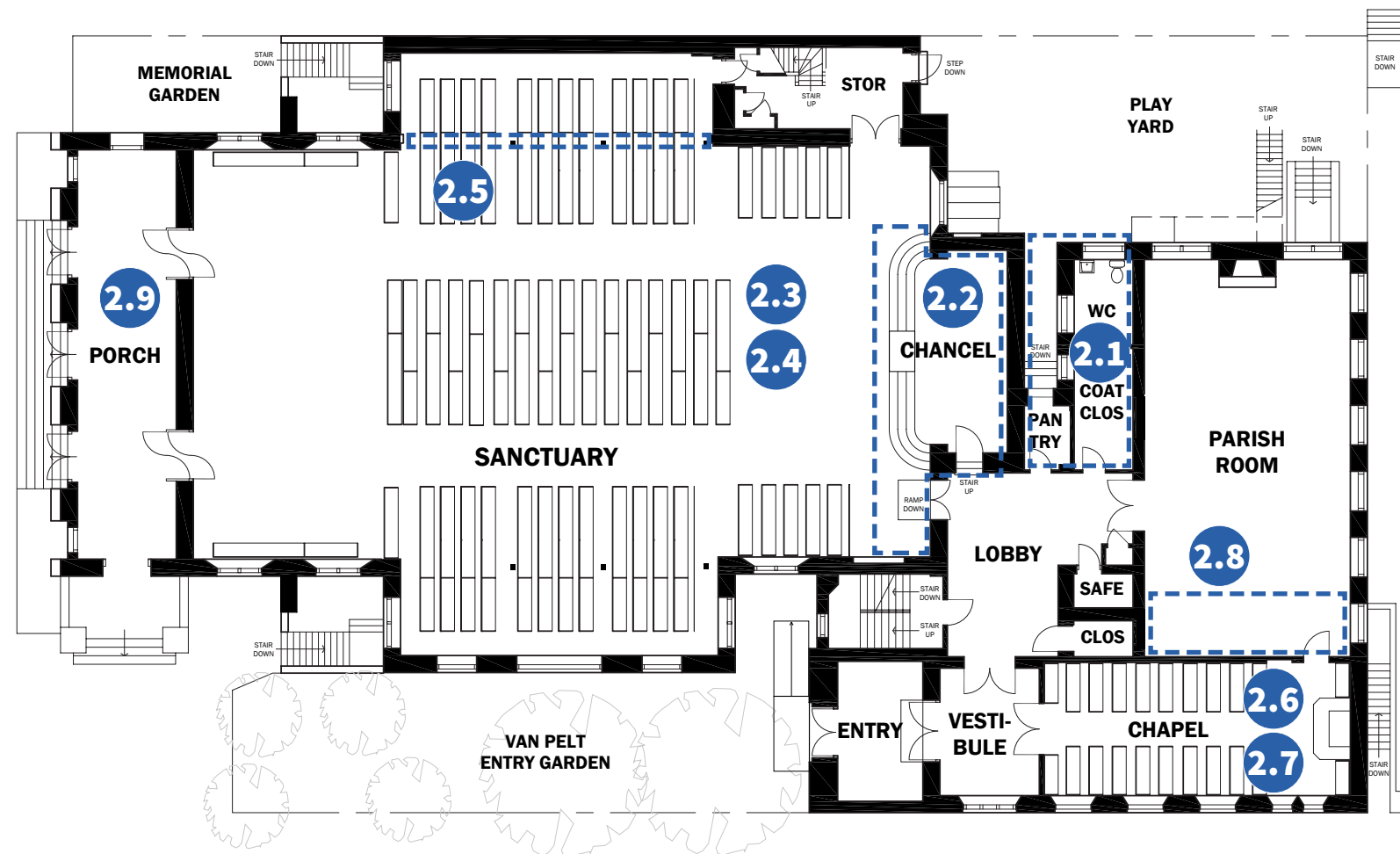


- 1.1 HEATING, VENTILATION, AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC) REPAIRS**
New central building control system
New AC at Sanctuary, 3rd Floor, Griffin Hall (can be separate)
General HVAC upgrades and repairs
- 1.2 PLUMBING REPAIRS**
Piping, pump, water heater upgrades
Replace fixtures and piping throughout (does not include plumbing fixtures in recommended repairs to follow)
- 1.3 FIRE PROTECTION**
Sprinklers, including Sanctuary and Attic above
- 1.4 ELECTRICAL UPGRADES**
Replace outdated wiring, outlets, devices, equipment
- 1.5 LIGHTING UPGRADES**
Replace lights & controls at remaining areas
- 1.6 FIRE ALARM UPGRADES**
Fire alarms at Level 1
- 1.7 TELECOMMUNICATION UPGRADES**
Update equipment rooms, cable management, telecom/AV
- 1.8 ROOF REPAIRS***
Asphalt roof to resemble original tile roof
Miscellaneous flashing, gutters, downspouts
- 1.9 WINDOW REPAIRS***
Holiday Good Shepherd Window (Sanctuary East Nave)
2 Furness Windows (Sanctuary Nave)
Miscellaneous repairs throughout to glass and frames; addition of protection
- 1.10 STEAM HEATING SYSTEM***
- 1.11 MASONRY RESTORATION***
Southeast Elevation (Van Pelt Garden)
Northeast Gable Elevation (along Van Pelt St)
Other Miscellaneous Locations
- 1.12 AUTOMATIC EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS**
Allowance for 5 AEDs

*Current work or bidding in progress

NOTE: See Glossary of Terms on page 28

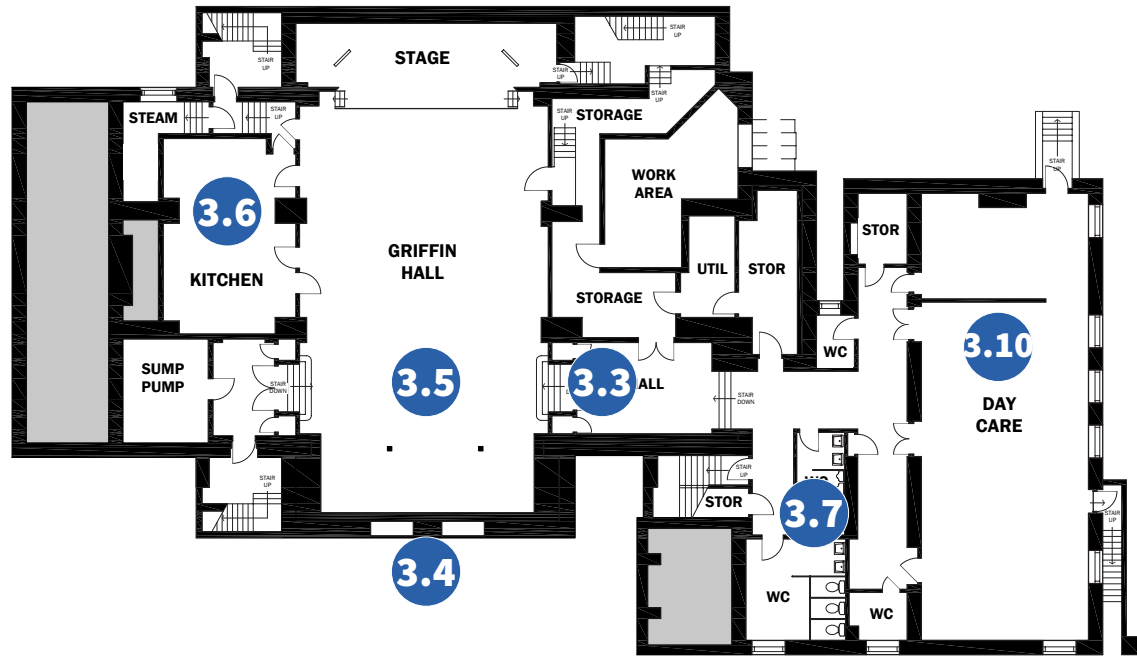
02 Targeted Improvements



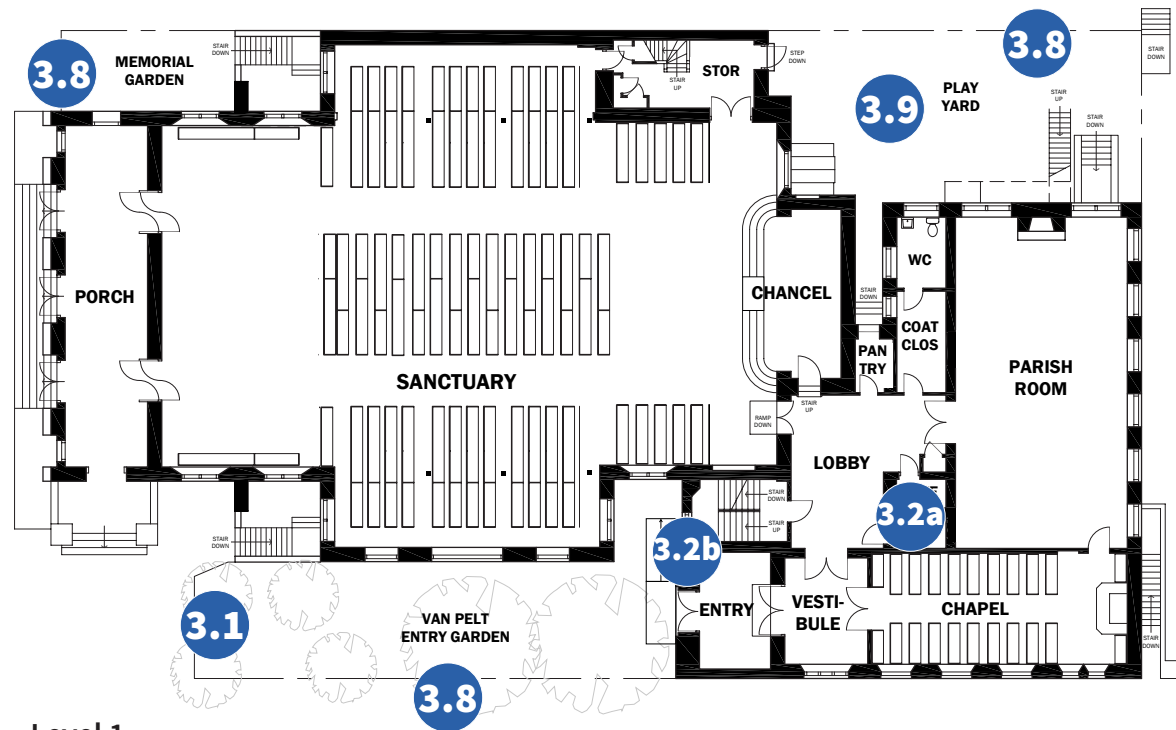
Level 1

- 2.1 LEVEL 1 RESTROOMS & PANTRY AREA**
 2 new ADA single-user restrooms
 New Parish Room Pantry & Closet
 New enclosed corridor to play yard
- 2.2 SANCTUARY CHANCEL MODIFICATION**
 New enlarged, ADA-accessible chancel with storage below
 New widened ADA ramp from Lobby to Sanctuary
- 2.3 SANCTUARY NEW SEATING & FINISHES**
 Pew demolition / reconfiguration
 Structural repairs allowance
 Patch/repair/refinish pews & interiors, including Sanctuary floor repair
 Allowance for new chairs
- 2.4 SANCTUARY UTILITY UPGRADES**
 New Central AC at Sanctuary
 New electrical, lighting, controls, smoke detectors at Sanctuary
- 2.5 SANCTUARY TRANSEPT DIVIDER**
 New custom sliding doors at transept under organ loft for flex storage
- 2.6 CHAPEL NEW SEATING & FINISHES**
 Pew demolition
 New carpet, patching/repair/painting at floors and walls
 Allowance for new chairs
- 2.7 CHAPEL UTILITY UPGRADES**
 Modify mech, ventilation, electrical, lighting, controls, FA
- 2.8 PARISH ROOM NEW STORAGE**
 2 new levels of enclosed storage at rear of room
- 2.9 PORCH IMPROVEMENTS**
 Misc. finishes, painting, display, digital display, lighting, bench

03 Major Construction & Renovation

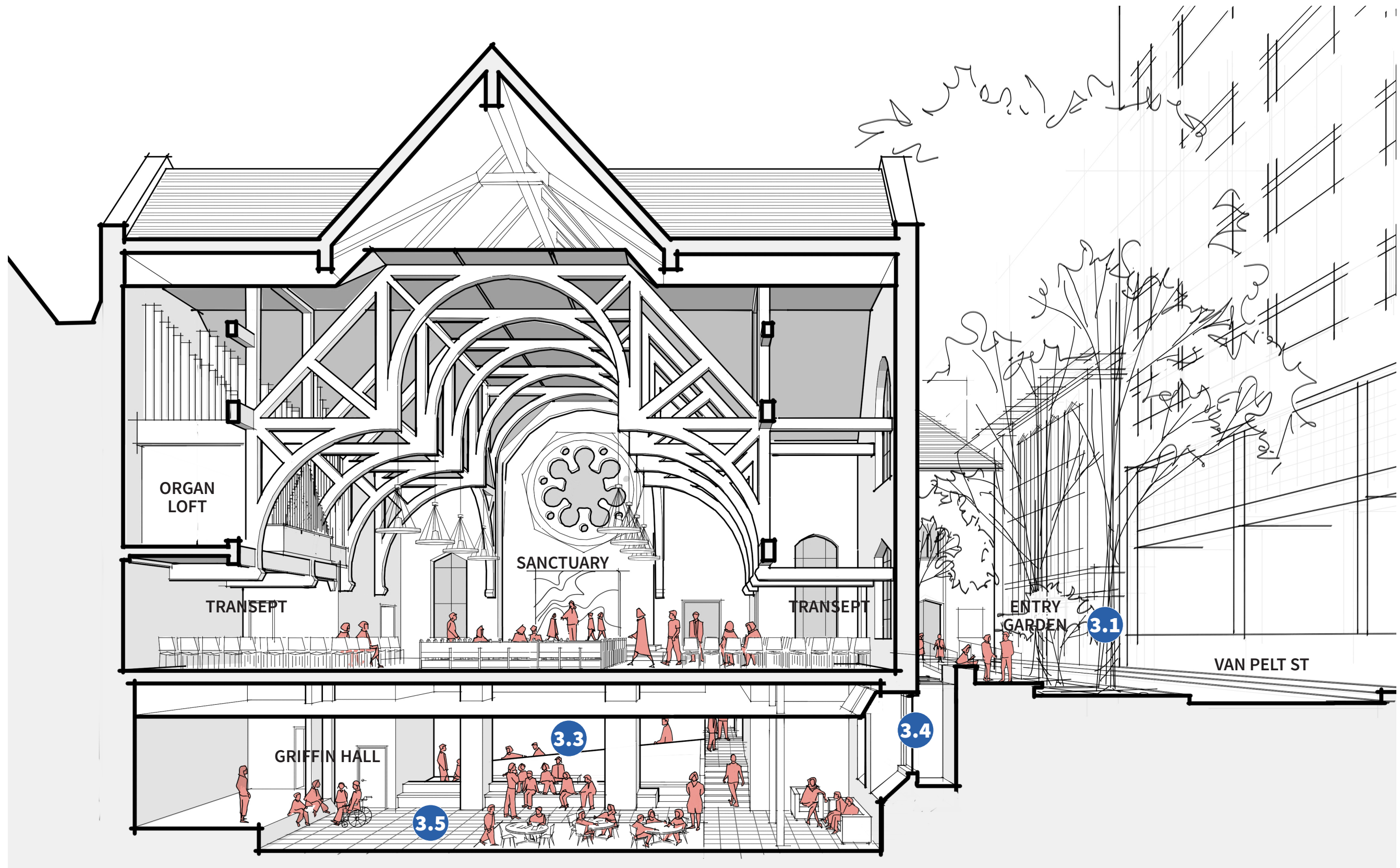


Basement Level



Level 1

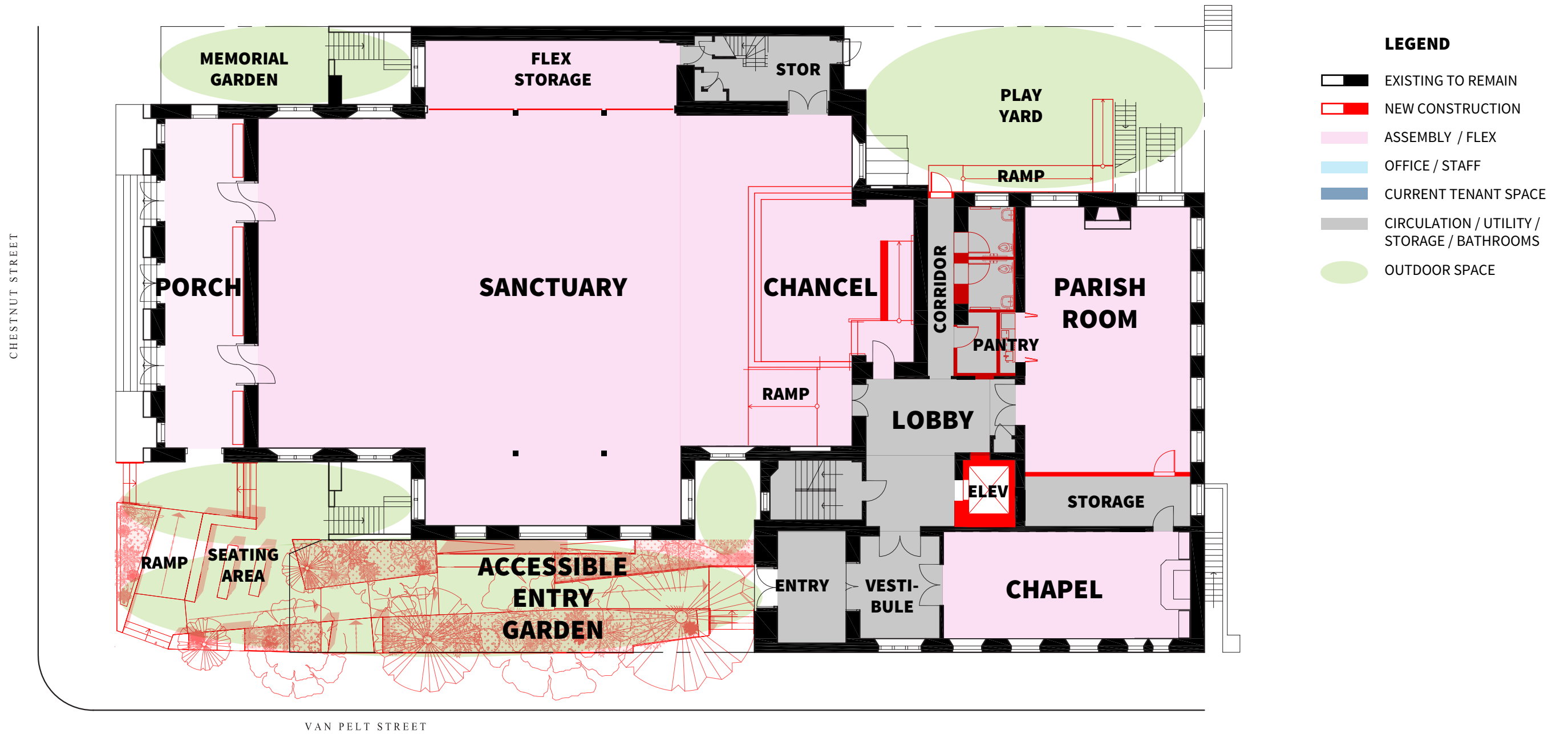
- 3.1 ACCESSIBLE VAN PELT ENTRY GARDEN**
New landscape, integrated deck, and ramping to Porch & Van Pelt Entry
Maintain existing heritage trees
- 3.2a NEW ELEVATOR TO BASEMENT (MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE TO 3.2b)**
New passenger elevator from Level 1 to Basement at existing lobby
Requires demolition of existing vault and leaves existing stair intact
- 3.2b NEW ELEVATOR TO BASEMENT & 3RD FLOOR (MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE TO 3.2a)**
New passenger elevator from Level to Basement and 3rd Floor at existing stair
Possibly involving full renovation of 3rd Floor
Requires demolition of existing stair and entry area
Requires temporary access provisions
- 3.3 BASEMENT RAMPING**
Integrated ramping, seating, and viewing area at Griffin Hall
- 3.4 BASEMENT CLERESTORY WINDOWS**
New lightwells & clerestory windows at east side of Griffin Hall
- 3.5 BASEMENT GRIFFIN HALL UPGRADES**
New finishes, lighting, controls, minor ventilation modifications
- 3.6 BASEMENT KITCHEN RENOVATION**
New Warming Kitchen: appliances, cabinets, finishes, lighting, ventilation / mechanical (not full commercial kitchen)
- 3.7 NEW BASEMENT RESTROOMS**
New reconfigured and renovated restrooms at basement
- 3.8 EXTERIOR LIGHTING**
Allowance for ground lighting & building uplighting throughout
- 3.9 REAR PLAY YARD IMPROVEMENTS**
New lighting, rolling planters, architectural equipment screen, paving
- 3.10 BASEMENT DAYCARE SPACE IMPROVEMENTS**
New wall, floor, and ceiling finishes and window repairs



Section Perspective of Sanctuary & Griffin Hall

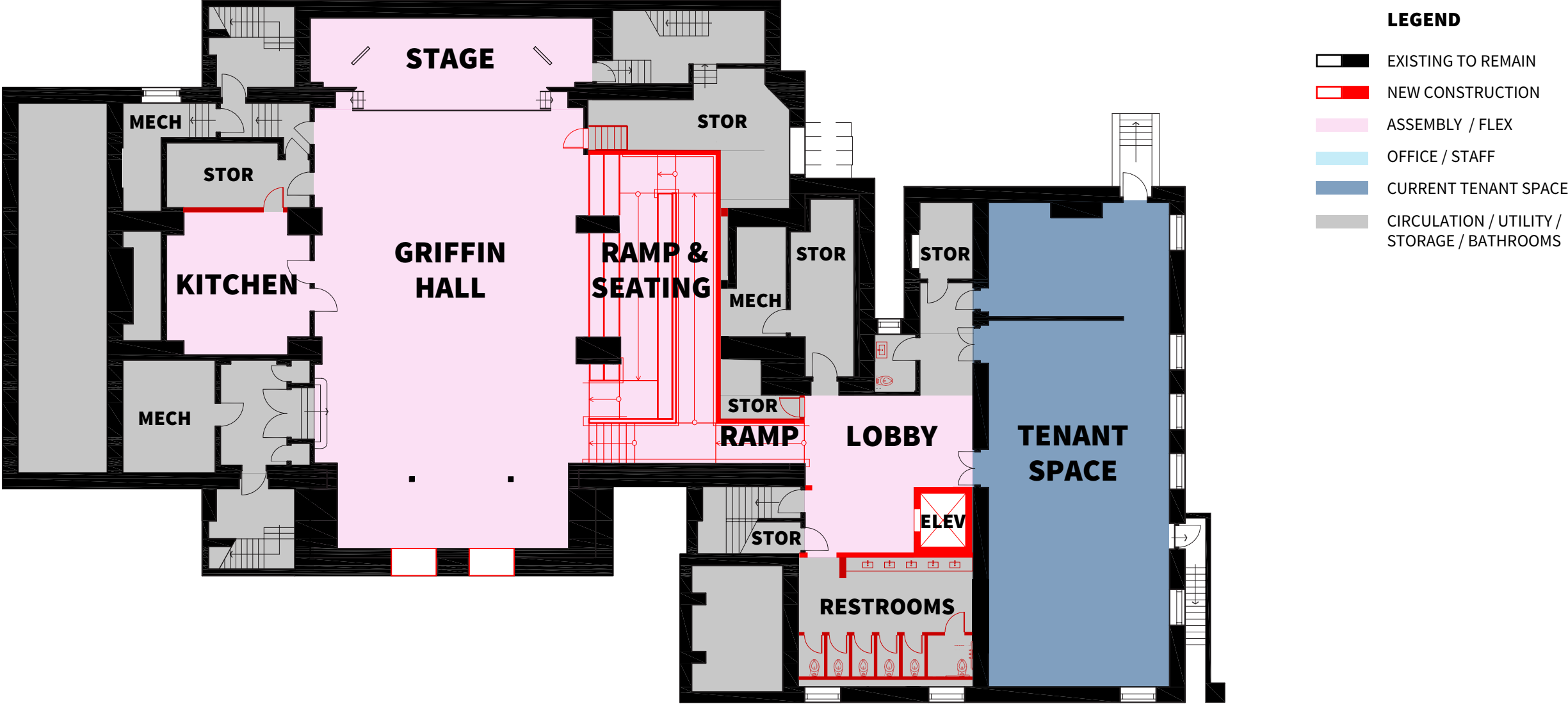
Concept Plans

LEVEL 1



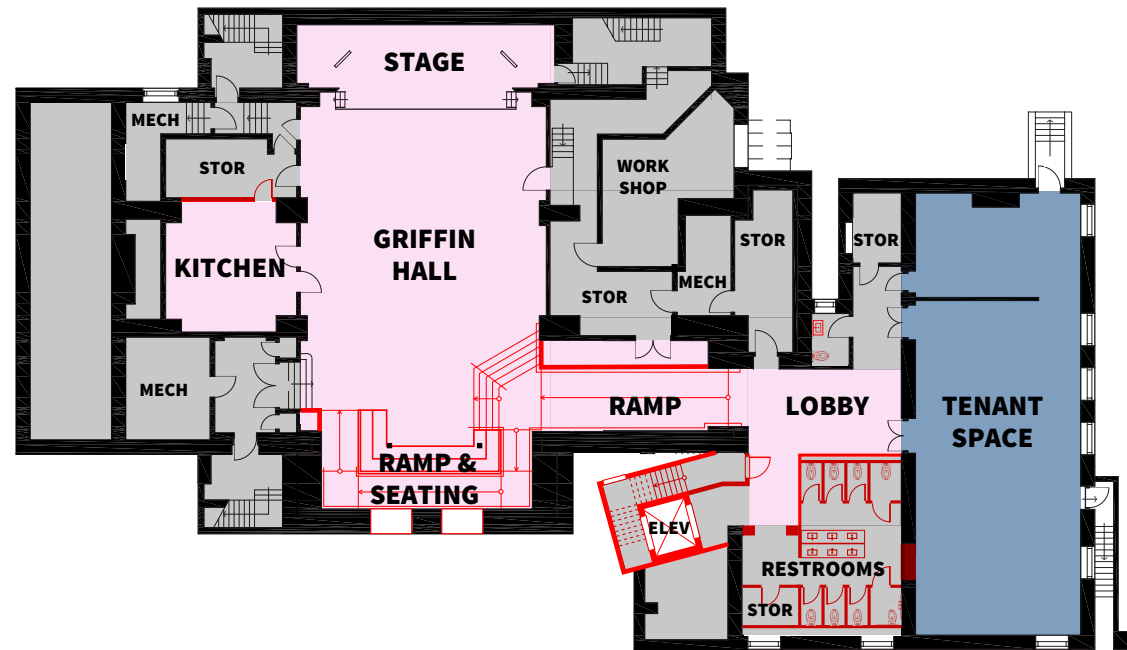
Concept Plans

BASEMENT LEVEL

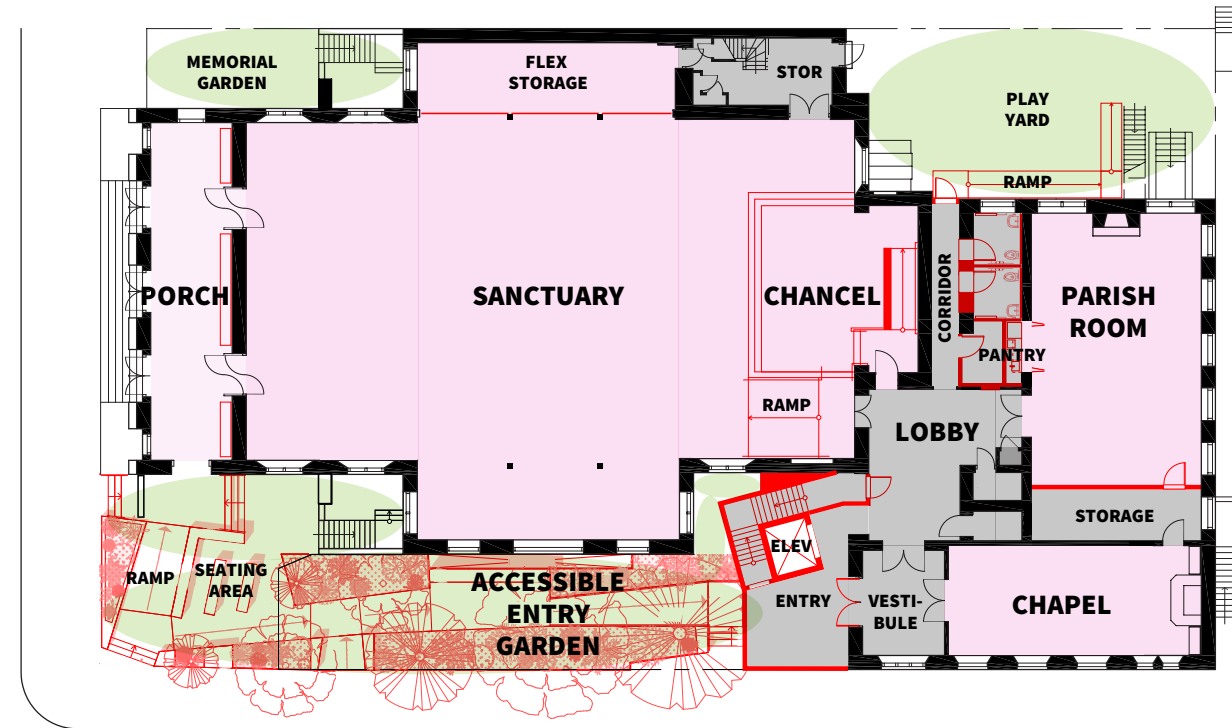


Concept Plans

ALTERNATE SCHEME



Basement Level



Level 1

LEGEND

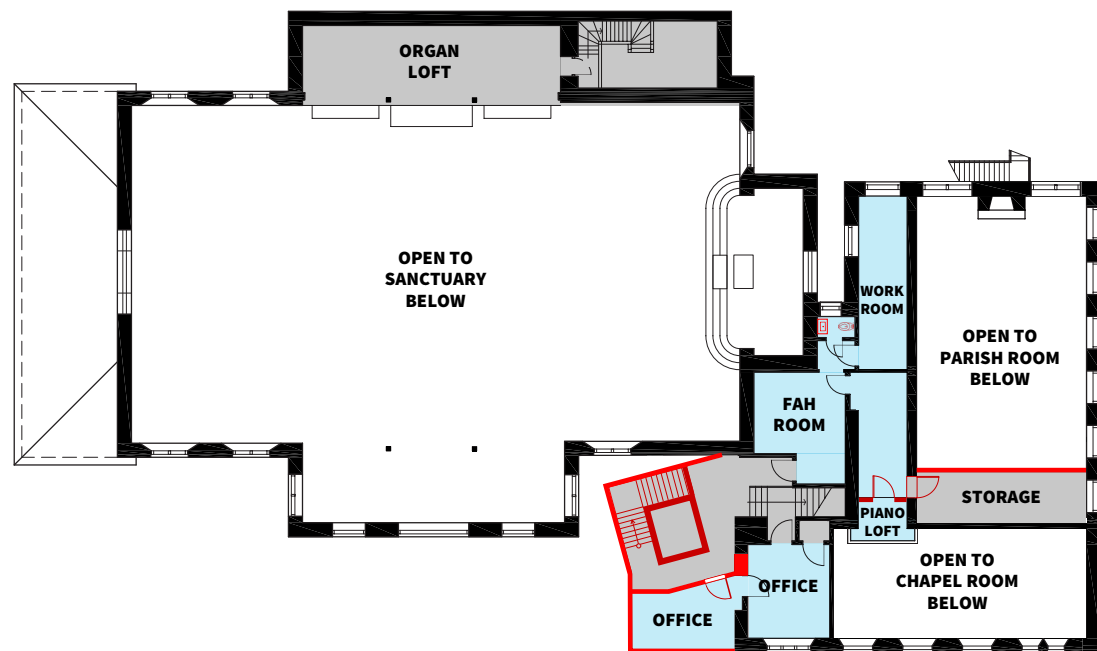
- EXISTING TO REMAIN
- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- ASSEMBLY / FLEX
- OFFICE / STAFF
- CURRENT TENANT SPACE
- CIRCULATION / UTILITY / STORAGE / BATHROOMS
- OUTDOOR SPACE

NOTE:

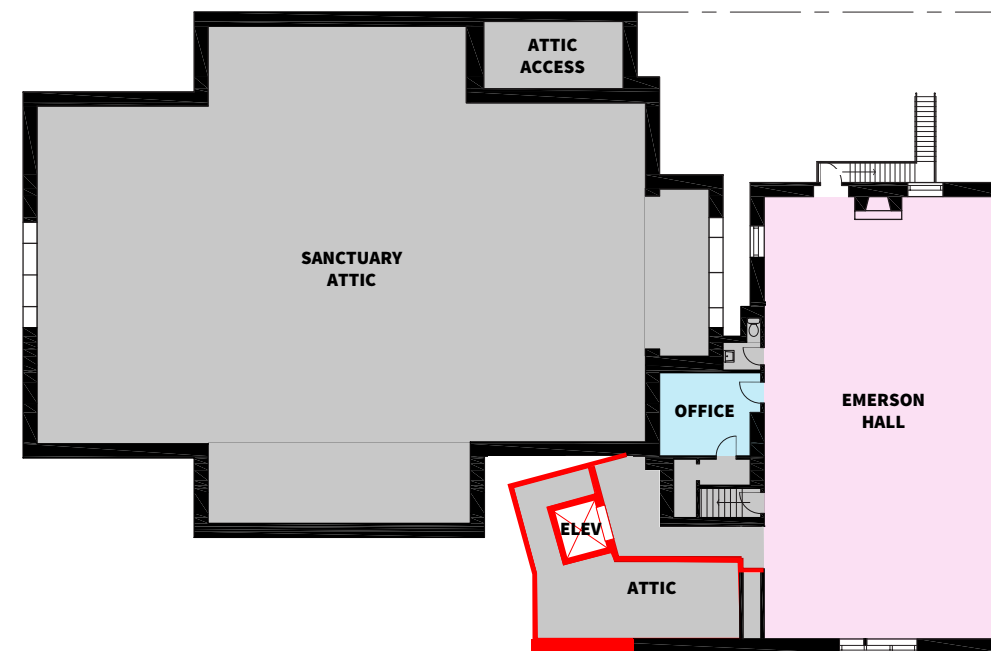
The primary distinction between this alternate scheme and the first scheme is the elevator location.

Some elements are interchangeable between the two schemes. For example, either basement ramp configuration leading to Griffin Hall could work with either elevator location.

See Sections 03.3 and 05 for further detail on potential elevator locations and basement ramp configurations.



Level 2



Level 3